

The Federal Spotlight

Labor Council Limits Security Exemption

By JOSEPH YOUNG
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President Nixon's federal labor relations council has ruled that agencies cannot use the unchallenged excuse that they are involved in internal security work to avoid dealing with government employee unions.

The council, which operates the labor-management program, reversed the decision of the assistant secretary of labor for labor-management relations who had refused to hear unions' challenges to such agency contentions.

The assistant secretary contended that he had no such authority, but the council overruled him.

It held that the assistant secretary has the authority to review an agency's action in which it classifies all or some of its units as performing as investigative or auditing work involved with internal security matters and thus not subject to unionization.

Government employee unions are disturbed over the fact that an increasing number of defense units as well as non-defense agencies such as National Aeronautics and Space Administration and others raise the issue of internal security being jeopardized by unionization of their employees.

The federal labor relations council agreed with this concern, declaring that an agency head could circumvent the intent of Nixon's executive order on labor-management relations in government by labeling segments of the agency's operations as "internal security" operations, thereby depriving employees of their rights to collective bargaining under the order.

"Any such interpretation would enable an agency head, arbitrarily or capriciously, to defeat the underlying purposes of the order," the council said.

Other issues such as the scope of an agency's intelligence, security and investigative work and how the executive order shall apply to such situations will be decided by the council. Entire agencies such as the FBI, Central Intelligence Agency and National Security Agency already are exempted from the executive order.

The case that resulted in the

council ruling involved employees in the audit division of NASA's citing section and the effort of the American Federation of Government Employees to hold an election among the non-supervisory employees for the purposes of representing them under collective bargaining.

DEFERRED ANNUITY — Hopes are rapidly fading that Congress will approve by May 31 the bill to give the 4.5 percent annuity increase to those who retire after that date. So if you're planning to retire and take advantage of the 4.5 percent increase, do so by May 31.

SAME OLD STAND — Regardless of whether there is a Democrat or Republican occupying the White House, one thing always remains the same. Federal management wants to retain its prerogatives in government personnel matters and wants as little outside interference as possible.

This was emphasized yesterday in hearings by the House Civil Service Employee Benefits subcommittee on the "bill of rights" for government employees.

Speaking for the Nixon administration, Chairman Robert Hampton of the Civil Service Commission was just as emphatic in opposing the bill as was CSC Chairman John Macy in 1968 on behalf of the Johnson administration.

Hampton said the bill to protect federal employes against in-

vasion of privacy by their agencies and coercion to contribute to charity drives and political campaigns was not needed. He said employes already are protected against such threats to their constitutional rights.

Hampton left little doubt that Nixon would veto the bill if it should be approved by Congress in its present form.

He also strongly objected to the bill's proposed board on employes' rights to which employes could take their complaints on agencies' snooping into their private affairs or forcing them into making contributions or outside-work activities.

Under questioning by subcommittee chairman Rep. James Hanley, D-N.Y., and Rep.

Charles Wilson, D-Calif., Hampton said the administration would not object to legislation strengthening federal employes' rights against coercion to make charitable or political contributions.

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SPA WINNER — Charles Mulally, Army Department's civilian personnel director, has been selected by the Society for Personnel Administration as its 1971 winner of the Warner W. Stockberger award for outstanding contributions to the advancement of public personnel management.

Mulally's selection was a popular choice. He is one of the ablest and most progressive personnel directors in government.